

## [Marie Haggerty--Worcester #5]

Mass. 1938-9 Mrs. Marie Haggerty - Paper 5 [7/19/39?]

[July 6 - 1939?]

STATE MASSACHUSETTS

NAME OF WORKER EMILY B. MOORE

ADDRESS 84 ELM STREET,

WORCESTER, MASS.

DATE OF INTERVIEW JUNE 20, 1939

SUBJECT LIVING LORE

NAME OF INFORMANT MRS. MARIE HAGGERTY

ADDRESS WORCESTER, MASS.

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Name: Emily B. Moore

Title: Living Lore

Assignment: Worcester

Topic: Mrs. Marie Haggerty Paper 5

"I guess I was 'bout 16 when I went to Boston, but I can't remember how old I was when I left school. Maybe I was 12 or 13, for we never went beyond the grade school. I don't

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even recollect if they had High School, but if they did, it must have been only for the rich people, although my uncle was considered to be in comfortable means. I do know well, that I went to school only in the fall and winter, and that my uncle had to drive me there, and I had to carry my dinner. You see, we lived on the outskirts of the town, and I was too little to walk, he said. I didn't like school but it was better than staying home and doing farm work, and there was plenty of that when I got home. Many the time my aunts would be in town for some errands and they'd stop at school and get me dismissed and make me ride home with them, and they hardly give me time to get my school clothes off, to get to work. They sure was 'tarters' for work. They always said 'a idle mind was a devil's workshop' and they never let me have time to get my mind idle. It was smart enough in school, and I know my uncle wanted me to get a good enough education so's I could take the job of postmaster, but my aunts always said if a woman could read and write she was lucky, and if they got a better education, it'd keep them from doing the things they were intended for; that a woman was a homemaker and a housekeeper and if she did that, it was all she was expected to do. Many good hard fights they'd have about me. Sometimes I think they hated me, but other times I could see a kind side to them. They had to work hard 2 for women, and of course they thought all women should work like they did. About 10 ago I went back to New Brunswick, and it didn't look the same to me. My aunts and uncle was dead, and the relations I had living there then didn't remember much about me, only hearing them talk of me. I was never sorry I left there, for the young people that was living there was just plain farmers, where I had been to the city practically all my life, and had city ways. The women all had large families, and none of them got as much education or experience as I had. One thing I saw made me laugh, and that was the old grind stone that I had to work to sharpen the knives. I had to pump that derved thing with my foot, till I'd like to break a leg, - and the poor things are still using it, but I noticed the men run it, not the women. I suppose they lived up to what my aunts wanted, that is the women folks, for they was all good housekeepers, and two of my cousins was practical nurses. I was glad when I got home and looked at my Marie, and her nice ways. I always wanted my children to have good educations, and John and Bill graduated from High School, but Marie never

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cared much about school. Kitty graduated from Normal School, but, just like my aunts said, education didn't do her no good for she got married as soon as she got out of school. Well, mebbe its good to fall back on, like with you, who knows, mebbe someday Kitty'I I have to work, too. One thing that is out in my mind pretty strong is what they used to tell me when I was young; they always 3 said the 'man' was head of the house, and women always looked up to them, and did what they was told. Now, they still do that in New Brunswick but it ain't so here. I was always the boss in our house and poor Pa, he never crossed me onct in the whole time we was married. I got all his wages and did all the buying and payin' of bills. If I wanted to move, we moved, and Pa never said a word. No, I never regretted comin' to Boston, for, like I told you, I always had good jobs, and was never considered like a maid, but more like a murse or companion."

"Well, I don't remember much about my mother, only that she was little and dainty and very pretty, but not like my aunts that was big and clumsy. They never talked much about her, but then they never talked much anyway, only when they was givin' orders. My uncle often talked about my mother and from what I got from him, she must have been 'quality', for he said she was a lady every inch and my father was a gentleman. I never saw my father at all, and what little I remember of my mother, she was quiet and never had much to say. Oh, yes, the aunts told me stories sometimes at night when I was holding the wool and they was spinning it on the wheel, but the stories they told always had some sort of a moral, or if anything happened and they wanted to teach me a lesson, they'd tell a story and work it around as if they knowed the person, and it always ended in somethin' awful or terrible happening. Someone near us once cheated another party out of something, and I never 4 forget the story they told. My blood like to run cold. Oh, yes, I remember it: well, it seems that there's two engineers, and each one has a large family, and they decide to throw their money together and buy a large farm and have someone work it and sell the vegetables and the like, and each have half of the profits. Well, they did that for a long time, but then one of the engineers got killed, and before he died he called his friend and told him to keep on with the farm and divide the profits with his family, so they wouldn't

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starve. The first engineer dies, and the other one promised he'd look out for his family. He did for a while, but then go got greedy, and decided he'd keep all the money for himself. The first month that he didn't give the widow her share, as he would drive his engine past the farm, it went by all right. The second month as he passed the farm, the engine slowed down; each time he went by it would go slower. He made his fireman put all the steam he had, on as he passed the farm, but no matter what he done, the engine would slow down, and almost stop. After a while, as he went by the farm, the engine stopped completely. He tried everything, but no use. Finally, some of his friends told him to go to a certain fortune teller and see what she had to say about it. Well, sir, he went to the woman, and she asked him what it was, that he had done something to the dead and they couldn't rest. Well, he like to died, but she couldn't help him until he told her. He told her about the farm and cheating the widow out of her share of the profits. Well, the fortune teller told him to get on his engine, and go alone, and as he got to the farm and the engine stopped, to take a white handkerchief out and hold it up in the air and say: 'In the name of the Lord, what do you want?' The engineer knowed he couldn't go by, so he got the handkerchief and got on his engine and as he stopped at the farm, he said, shaking almost to death, 'In the name of the Lord, what do you want?' and a voice out of the darkness said, 'I want half.' Well, he went home and made out the widow's share, and from that time on, he could go about his work, and always could pass the farm. Can you imagine how I would shivver when they told me that story. Of course that meant never to cheat anybody, not even the dead. There was always a story like that, with a lesson.

"There are lots of things that are different now, that we did when I was young. Why, we never wore the same clothes on Sunday that we wore during the week. With the men, their clothes would sometimes last until they was green with age. The woman always had hats to match their dresses, and my aunts always wore [hats.?] After I got to Boston, I soon dressed like the other girls, but I must have looked funny when I landed, for all my clothes was home-made. Then, about eatin', - we always at hearty food. Uncle always said to start the day off with a hearty breakfast, for a good filled belly would ward off any

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kind of sickness. None of us was ever sick. We et logs of ham, and that'd make you drink plenty of water, and water kept your innerts washed out well. We always had lots of hearty vegetables, and when we'd set the table, we always put on big deep dishes of potatoes and veg-

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[ set the table, we always put on big deep dishes of potatoes and vegetables, ] and a body could help themselves till they got their fill. We generally had ham or smoked meet or boiled beef for suppers, but on Sundays, we always had chicken, and it was nothin' to kill two or three chickens for Sunday dinner. They boiled them or fried them, but I don't think they ever roasted them. We only had fruit, depending on the time of the year it was, and if it was fall or winter, or winter it was grapes or apples, and in the summer it was berries or pears. No, we didn't do much with grapes but make jelly and wine and we used to dry the apples and berries. Oh, no, we'd cut the apples in slices and put them in the sun to dry and then when they got dried out, we'd pack them away. We'd do the same with berries. We had a n outside, bakeoven and we used to dry the berries out in that. We salted away pork and beef and used that in the winter. We'd sell as many eggs as we could, but when we couldn't sell, we'd salt away. We buried cabbage and potatoes to keep for the winter. Oh, when I think of the work I had to do, it was terrible. When I worked at Boston, I worked hard, and we worked usually from early morning until about dusk, but when you left, you was done for the night. That was when I was working for the dressmaker, and I only stayed about two years. When I think of my uncle's place, we'd be up at the crack of dawn and work till dark, and then when I'd come in, I'd have to help the aunts, and many's the time I fell asleep holding the wool for them. We never worked by the clock, and we never got one job done. No, I never wanted to cling to any old customs, - all I wanted to do was to forget them. Now, when I go riding and see a farm, I can never see the beauty of it like some 7 people do. I always think of how the poor women of the family have to work. I hated Saturdays in New Brunswick for every Saturday I had to black the boots of everyone, including my uncle. He always helped me and we'd make fun, but it wasn't to

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my liking to have to clean my aunt's shoes. No, dear, child, no, - I'm glad I'm living in a different place, where they do things different.”

“I think we have a wonderful government here, and I think its grand for a woman to be able to vote, and it is good that men have patience with the women in politics. I'd never like it myself but some women's smarter than men, and they know what it 's all about. I've heard many women making speeches that was lots better than some men. I think women make more honest politicians than men, for men seem to always see the money side of things, and don't have a conscience like women do. Did you ever notice if a woman got somethin' in her mind, the devil himself couldn't get it out? Well, that's the way with them in politics, - they make up their mind slow, but when its made up, its hard to change them. I think they keep the men straight, for a woman hates scandal, and won't become mixed in it publicly, and men knows that, and they get ashamed sometimes of the things they're thinkin' of doing. My goodness, yes, I think the Old Age Pension is wonderful for old people. It makes them feel that even if they're old, there is still some place in the world for them. I know since I've had mine, my children are not so impudent and when I can bring in somethin' each month, I think it makes me more independent. I've always had a fear of the poorhouse or home farm, and while 8 I know my children would never let me go there, you can't tell what will happen to them - they might'nt be here to help me. If all I had was my pension and a little extra work from you and others, well - I guess I could get by al I right. It is a very comfortable feeling to know you're not a pauper.”